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Dear Mr. President: Wall urges Obama to approve Keystone XL

Joint letter sent to White House. Premier, U.S. governors tout pipeline's role in 'future economic prosperity' of both countries

JEFF MACKEY
jeff.mackey@metronews.ca

Premier Brad Wall and 10 U.S. governors are hoping they've given U.S. President Barack Obama something to think about as he continues to mull over his options regarding the Keystone XL pipeline.

The group of leaders sent a joint letter to Obama on Thursday urging him to approve the controversial pipeline.

In the letter the premier and the governors note the pipeline is "fundamentally important to the future economic prosperity of both the United States and Canada."

The pipeline has become a divisive issue in the U.S. and Canada. While many point to the economic benefits of such a pipeline, others have expressed concern about the environmental impact of such a project.

The pipeline would transport oil from Hardisty, Alta., through southwest Saskatchewan to Steele City, Neb., and then on to the Gulf Coast. The president could rule on a revised application for the pipeline in the first quarter of 2013.

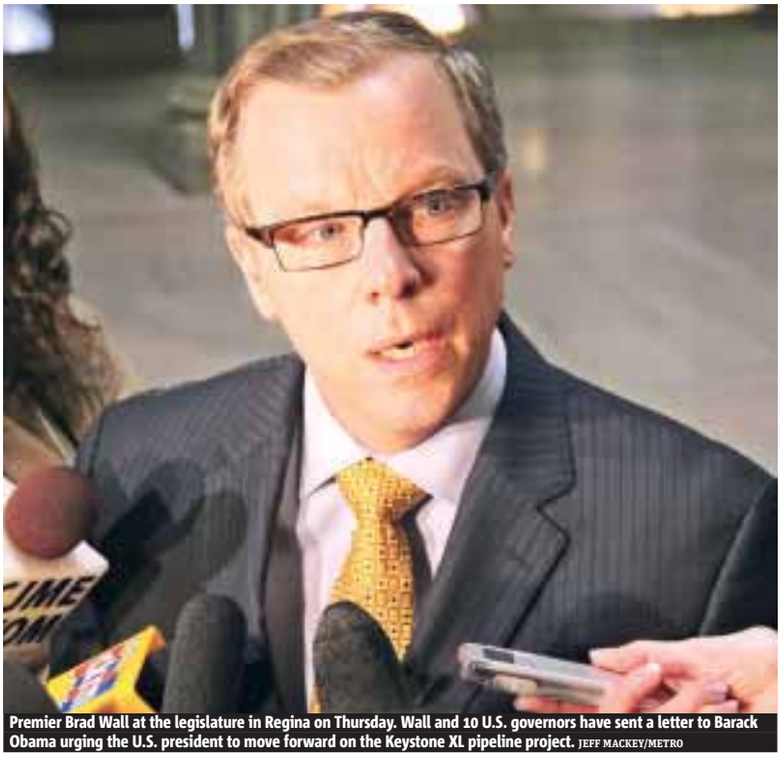
"We wanted to work together with our partners in the United States and put forward what we think is a very compelling case for the U.S. administration to approve Keystone," said Wall at the legislature on Thursday.

Alberta Premier Alison Redford was not among the politicians who signed the letter, but Wall said he doesn't see a problem with that. Redford has been working hard on the file, and Saskatchewan wanted to do its part, he said.

"I think this is helpful, where you have the province of Saskatchewan, with a real stake in the project, also taking a bit of a lead, and so we're happy to do that," he said.

A spokesman for Redford said in an email to The Canadian Press that he did not believe she had been specifically asked to sign the letter.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS



Premier Brad Wall at the legislature in Regina on Thursday. Wall and 10 U.S. governors have sent a letter to Barack Obama urging the U.S. president to move forward on the Keystone XL pipeline project. JEFF MACKEY/METRO

The stories of their lives

Write on! Shaw TV's Lit Happens celebrates the province's literary talent in weekly 10-minute segments that delve into the lives and works of local authors PAGE 3

Serve waffles the savoury, soul-food way

Top 'em with Southern-style chicken and gravy for a deliciously different brunch dish PAGE 11

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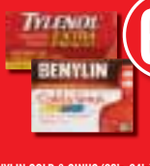

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Get literal with Lit Happens

Author, author!
Weekly cable show proves the old saying that 'Saskatchewan is to writers what Paris is to artists'

JANE CAULFIELD
jane.caulfield@metronews.ca

Host Wes Funk interviews writer Marion Mutala, author of the children's book Baba's Babushka, for his program, Lit Happens, on Shaw TV. SCREENGRAB

You know what they say — sometimes, lit happens.

In Saskatoon, Lit Happens all the time, and people love it. At least, they love the show on Shaw TV that features local authors talking about their work.

"It's a weekly 10-minute-long segment, where I just interview a different local author. About their book and about their life story and how they came to be an author," host Wes Funk says.

"It's sort of a little success story," he says.

"Shaw and I came up with the idea together, where local authors could finally have some decent TV coverage of their books. It's like the little show that could."

Funk, an author himself, says the show is really about celebrating the fact that Saskatchewan has been growing great literary talent for a long time.

"I often hear the expression 'Saskatchewan is to writers what Paris is to artists' — we seem to be an oasis of literary arts. We are the home to some very, very affluent authors. Right now, some of the biggest literary names in Canada live in Saskatchewan. We should be celebrating that," Funk says.

He notes that Lit Happens consists of more than just interviews with authors — it aims to answer some of the questions people have about how to become a published author or what the writing life is like.

As a result, the show looks to interview a broad range of people from the literary community, from first-time authors and publishing professionals to international superstars such as Yann Martel.

The program runs hourly on Wednesdays and again on Thursdays on Shaw TV.

Feds, province fund aboriginal job-skills program

Rob Norris, MLA for Saskatoon Greystone, speaks at a press conference at Cameco Corp. on Thursday afternoon to announce funding that will help 800 First Nations people in Saskatchewan train for high-demand jobs in the mining industry. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

With the aim of helping aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan to obtain long-term employment, Ottawa and the province have announced some $9.4 million in funding for Northern Career Quest.

At a press conference on Thursday at Cameco Corp. in Saskatoon, MP Rob Clarke (Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River) said $7.9 million will be contributed to Northern Career Quest (NCQ) through the federal Skills and Partnership Fund. The provincial ministry of the economy will pitch in the remaining $1.5 million.

"It's looking at First Nations, Métis and Inuit about providing the funding for the main purpose for economic development, and that's through job skills and training," Clarke said. "The federal government, has really made a concerted effort to look at economic growth for the Canadian economy … and aboriginal people out there are going to participate and become major contributors."

A press release says the NCQ will provide classroom and on-site training in the mining industry. Over a period of two years, 800 participants will be trained in high-demand jobs such as mine technicians and heavy-equipment operators.

Rob Norris, the MLA for Saskatoon Greystone, said the new investment in NCQ will help address Saskatchewan's labour shortage.

"This is an opportunity of a lifetime," Norris said. "There are more than 10,000 jobs open and available in Saskatchewan today. So by making sure that more people in Saskatchewan — especially our First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan — have increased access to skills, training and education, that learning component, then they'll also have access to the earning component."

The NCQ will also be partly funded by industry partners including Cameco, Areva and Northlands College.

MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Health care

Patients waiting less time for surgery in Saskatchewan

Wait times for surgery continued to fall in November, the province says.

The latest statistics show about 300 fewer people had to wait more than six months for surgery that month, compared to October 2012.

Since November 2007, the number of people waiting more than half a year for surgery has dropped 60 per cent to 4,271.

A total of 54,853 surgeries had been performed as of the end of November 2012.

The government has set a goal of reducing wait times for surgery to three months or less by April 2014.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/CTV REGINA

Firearms seized

Woman charged after gun raid

A 23-year-old Saskatoon woman is facing 28 firearms charges after police raided her home early on Thursday. The Street Gang Unit executed a search warrant on her house on Avenue W South and seized five firearms and ammunition. The woman is scheduled to appear in court on Jan. 18. METRO

Police investigation

Missing woman's body found at Shoal Lake

RCMP are not ruling out foul play in the death of a Saskatchewan woman who had not been seen by her family since Christmas Eve.

The body of Emiline Marie Kitchener, 34, was discovered by volunteer searchers in a field on the Shoal Lake First Nation, about 90 kilometres east of Nipawin.

A family friend reported seeing Kitchener in a Nipawin bar on Jan. 4.

Her family reported her missing last Saturday, a day after her cellphone was noted to be active in the Saskatoon area.

Police say Kitchener had possible ties to Sturgeon Lake, Sask., and The Pas, Man.

An autopsy is scheduled.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Inquest jurors see the cell where Ashley Smith died

What could guards see? Food slot and viewing window may be main focus of hearing into troubled teen's last hours

Dr. John Carlisle, presiding coroner at the Ashley Smith inquest, arrives at the institution where the troubled teen died. COLIN PERKEL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Inquest jurors paced the beige-painted segregation cell Thursday where a troubled teen choked to death five years ago as security guards stood watching her.

The tour of the Grand Valley Institution in Kitchener, one of five federal prisons for women in Canada, aimed to offer the jury better insight into the place where Ashley Smith, 19, spent the last weeks of her life.

"This was Ashley's cell," declared assistant warden Tony Simoes.

A key difference between how the cell was when Smith died in it and how it is now are the two large windows in the heavy grey door that would have given guards a better view of the interior.

The old-style doors, still on the three adjacent cells, have only a small viewing window at about eye level and a "cuff port" or food slot closer to knee level.

Evidence about what guards could see of the cell interior is expected to play a role given that Smith frequently covered the interior surveillance camera and viewing window with toilet paper.

Bits of toilet paper are still visible on some of the cameras.

Dr. John Carlisle, presiding coroner, urged jurors to examine what would be visible if guards could only look through the food slot — about the size of a large mail slot.

"Just make observations," Carlisle advised the jurors.

Smith choked herself to death in her cell in October 2007, while guards, ordered not to intervene, looked on.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Terror-case Canadian gets 14-year jail term

A Canadian businessman was sentenced to 14 years in prison on Thursday for providing material support to overseas terrorism.

It was alleged Tahawwur Rana supported a Pakistani group whose 2008 attacks on Mumbai, India, left more than 160 people dead.

The judge sentenced Rana in a Chicago court to the prison term followed by five years of supervised release.

Rana, a 52-year-old Pakistani-born Canadian, faced a maximum 30 years in prison.

Jurors in 2011 convicted him of providing support for the Pakistani group Lashkar-e-Taiba, and for supporting a never-carried-out plot to attack a Danish newspaper that printed cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in 2005.

The cartoons angered many Muslims because pictures of the prophet are prohibited in Islam.

But jurors cleared Rana of the third and most serious charge of involvement in the three-day rampage in Mumbai, India's largest city, which has often been called India's 9-11.

Tahawwur Rana is shown in a 2011 courtroom sketch. TOM GIANNI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The government's star witness at Rana's trial was admitted terrorist David Coleman Headley, who had pleaded guilty to laying the groundwork for the Mumbai attacks.

The American-Pakistani testified against his school friend Rana to avoid the death penalty and extradition.

He is scheduled to be sentenced in Chicago next week.

Headley spent five days on the witness stand — taking up more than half the trial — detailing how he allegedly worked for both the Pakistani intelligence agency known as the ISI and Lashkar.

Prosecutors also presented Rana's videotaped arrest statement to the FBI, during which he said he knew Headley had trained with Lashkar. They also played a September 2009 recorded phone conversation between the men.

Rana — who owned an immigration consulting firm in Toronto and a home in Ottawa — was accused of allowing Headley to open a branch of his Chicago-based immigration law business in Mumbai as a cover story and travel as a representative of the company in Denmark.

In court, a travel agent showed how Rana booked travel for Headley.

Rana's trial in 2011 came just weeks after navy SEALs found Osama bin Laden hiding in Pakistan.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fracking fuss. Yoko Ono takes son Sean Lennon on a protest over drilling

Yoko Ono, Sean Lennon and actress Susan Sarandon spoke out against fracking — a drilling technique — during a tour of natural-gas drilling sites in northeastern Pennsylvania on Thursday.

The celebrities said the technique is a danger to air, water and human health.

Ono accused the gas industry of disregarding residents' welfare. "They care about making money," she said.

The celebs headed to rural Susquehanna County to see gas wells, compressor stations and other evidence of the Marcellus Shale drilling boom.

They also visited with residents who say they have been negatively impacted by drilling.

Fracking involves the high-pressure injection of millions of gallons of water, along with sand and chemical additives, deep underground to break apart shale rock and free the gas trapped inside it.

The industry and many federal and state officials say fracking is safe when it's done properly.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mother and son: Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon chat as they head to drilling sites in Pennsylvania on Thursday. RICHARD DREW/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

School staffer's claim

Boy, 13, accused of sex attack

A 13-year-old boy is facing charges after Peterborough police allege a female staff member at an area school was choked and sexually assaulted.

Police say the woman told them she was alone in a classroom Wednesday with the boy when she was attacked.

He was charged with sexual assault and overcoming resistance to commit an indictable offence. He cannot be identified.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jail sentence

Top court to hear condom case?

A Nova Scotia man convicted of sexual assault for poking holes in his girlfriend's condoms to get her pregnant is taking his appeal to Canada's highest court.

Craig Jaret Hutchinson of Shelburne County received an 18-month prison sentence in December 2011, and lost his appeal with the provincial Appeal Court earlier this month.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Six-week protest

Queen rejects plea over Spence

Queen Elizabeth has rejected an appeal to intervene in chief Theresa Spence's liquids-only protest, but says she is taking note of concerns for the chief's health.

Spence is camped out on Victoria Island, in the Ottawa River, and says she will protest until the Governor General and the prime minister meet with all chiefs on the plight of First Nations people.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Student loans

Lawsuits planned over missing info

The federal government is being sued over the loss of a hard drive containing personal information about more than half-a-million people who took out student loans.

Merchant Law Group is filing class-action lawsuits in Calgary and Winnipeg, and says it plans to file more in other parts of the country.

Ottawa says the device contained data on 583,000 Canada Student Loans Program borrowers from 2000 to 2006.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hostages freed, but death toll at Algerian gas plant unclear

Foreign captives. Kidnapping was one of the largest ever attempted by a militant group in North Africa

Algerian special forces launched a rescue operation Thursday at a natural-gas plant in the Sahara Desert and freed foreign hostages held by al-Qaida-linked militants, but estimates for the number of dead varied wildly from four to dozens.

Militants claiming revenge for France's intervention against rebels in Mali seized the BP, Statoil and Sonatrach-owned Ain Amenas natural-gas complex on Wednesday, taking dozens of foreign workers hostage.

Algerian state television said Thursday that four captives, two Britons and two Filipinos, had died. But the militants said at least 35 hostages had died in the state's rescue attempt. There was no way to independently verify the toll in the remote location, 1,300 kilometres from Algiers.

The reports of high casualties have deeply disturbed foreign governments, prompting a number to criticize Algeria's operation. Britain's Foreign Office attempted to prepare the British public by saying, "We should be under no illusion that there will be some bad and distressing news to follow from this terrorist attack."

Islamists from the Masked Brigade, a Mali-based al-Qaida offshoot, said Algerian helicopters opened fire as the militants tried to leave the vast complex with their hostages. They claimed that 35 hostages and 15 militants died and only seven hostages survived.

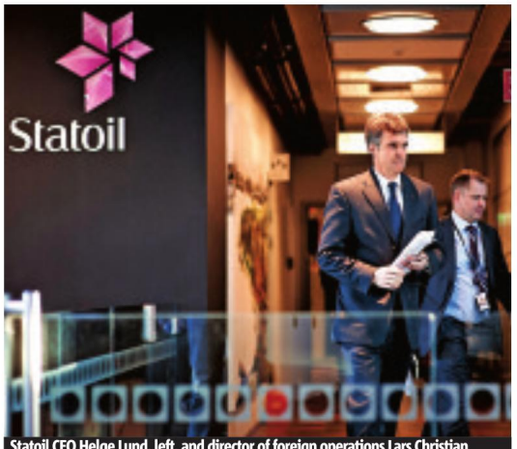
Algeria's official news service, meanwhile, claimed that 600 local workers were freed in the raid and half of the foreigners being held were rescued. Many of those locals were reportedly released on Wednesday, however, by the militants themselves.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Multinational terrorists

The Algerian government said it was forced to intervene due to the militants' stubbornness and their desire to escape with hostages.

- **Islamist militants.** Communications Minister Mohand Said Oubelaid said the "terrorists are multinational," coming from several different countries with the goal of "destabilizing Algeria, embroiling it in the Mali conflict and damaging its natural-gas infrastructure."



Statoil CEO Helge Lund, left, and director of foreign operations Lars Christian Bacher leave a meeting in Stavanger, Norway. Algerian forces raided a remote gas plant on Thursday in an attempt to free dozens of foreign hostages at the BP/Statoil/Sonatrach-run facility. KENT SKIBSTAD, NTB SCANPIX/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Privacy breach. Federal government faces lawsuits over lost student info

A massive privacy breach looks to land the federal government in court.

Two class-action lawsuits are being filed after Human Resources and Skills Development Canada lost a portable hard drive containing personal information about more than half a million people who took out student loans.

The department said last week the device contained data on 583,000 Canada Student Loans Program borrowers from 2000 to 2006.

The missing files include student names, social insurance numbers, dates of birth, contact information and loan balances of borrowers, as well as the personal contact information of 250 department employees. No banking or medical information was on the portable device.

Borrowers from Quebec, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories during this time period are not affected.

Bob Buckingham, a St. John's, N.L., lawyer who filed a statement of claim Thursday on behalf of those affected by the privacy breach, is warning the loss could affect more people than just the student-loan borrowers.

Human Resources is sending letters to advise those affected on how to protect their information. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Special court

Gang-rape trial to be fast-tracked

An Indian magistrate on Thursday ordered the trial of five men accused in the fatal gang rape of a young woman on a moving bus to be shifted to a special fast-track court in New Delhi. The first hearing is to be held there on Monday.

Lawyers for the five have said police mistreated their clients, including beating them to force them to confess to the Dec. 16 crime. A sixth suspect in the attack claims to be a juvenile and his case is being handled separately.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Government victory. Supreme Court will not hear challenge to wheat board overhaul

The federal government scored another court victory Thursday in an ongoing battle over its changes to the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled it will not hear an appeal by eight former board directors, who accused the government of breaking its own law by making radical changes without first holding a plebiscite among grain producers.

New legislation introduced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government strips the marketing agency of its monopoly on western wheat and barley sales.

As is its usual practice, the high court did not release reasons for its decision. Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz welcomed the ruling as "fantastic."

"It turns the page, lets farmers get on with what they do best, which is produce those great high-quality crops," Ritz told Regina radio station CKRM.

It is not the end of the legal battle. Supporters of the wheat board as it was prior to the change have filed a separate lawsuit in Federal Court. They said the Supreme Court rejection will not deter them.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"(The ruling) turns the page, lets farmers get on with what they do best."

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz

Market Minute

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Britain says neigh to eating horsemeat

'Horse burger' scandal. Tesco supermarket chain amps up damage control in wake of discovery that meat products contained up to 29% equine flesh

Putting the cart before the horse? An employee pushes shopping carts past the entrance to a Tesco Extra supermarket in New Malden, Surrey, England, in this 2009 photo. The Tesco chain has had to apologize to Britons after horsemeat was discovered in some of its burgers. GETTY IMAGES FILE

In Britain, a horse is a horse — not a main course. Tesco, the country's biggest supermarket chain, took out full-page newspaper ads Thursday to apologize for an unwanted ingredient in some of its hamburgers: horsemeat.

Ten million burgers have been taken off shop shelves after the revelation that beef products from three companies in Ireland and Britain contained horse DNA. Most had only small traces, but one burger of a brand sold by Tesco had meat content that was 29 per cent horse. The contrite grocer told customers that "we and our supplier have let you down and we apologize."

Reaction to the scandal in Britain goes beyond concerns about contaminated food. While people in some countries happily dine on equine flesh, in the land of Black Beauty and National Velvet, the idea fills many with horror.

Labour Party environment spokeswoman Mary Creagh reflected the feelings of many when she said Thursday that eating horsemeat is "strongly culturally taboo in the United Kingdom." She was echoing prohibitions in Western cultures that go back to 732 A.D., when Pope Gregory III declared horse-eating a pagan practice. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"Some people say, 'I have a horse. It'd be like eating my grandmother.' "

Paul Webb, director of Exotic Meats, a company in the English Midlands that sells products including horse burgers.

Online ticketing

Ticketfly to enter Canadian market

Canadian concertgoers may soon notice there's a new online ticketing company in town aiming to compete with Ticketmaster. The San Francisco-based Ticketfly announced Thursday that it's expanding into Canada and has reached deals with national event promoter Union Events and Toronto-based Collective Concerts to sell tickets online.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

22 million songs

Amazon opens MP3 store to iPhone, iPod Touch users

Amazon says iPhone and iPod Touch users can now buy music from its digital store for the first time. Steve Boom, vice-president of Amazon Music, says since the launch of the Cloud Player app for the iPhone and iPod Touch, customers have been asking for the ability to buy music from Amazon directly from their devices.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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HAPPINESS IS A WARM CONFESSION

THE LIST
Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

It was the best of weeks, it was the worst of weeks.
And it's not even over.

1 **Lance backpedals on Oprah.** Lance Armstrong pedals an epic two-part confession that he did in fact use performance-enhancing drugs to win a record seven Tour de France titles. If he doesn't end up resurrecting his reputation, at least he's resurrecting Oprah's ratings. Hey, it's not about the bike. Obviously, it never was.

2 **Idle No More.** You can say that again. Aboriginal people are mad as hell and they're not going to take it anymore. So they're barricading roads and bridges to make their point. But the spontaneous uprising seems to be taking more out of aboriginal leaders such as hunger-striker Theresa Spence and Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo than original-target Stephen Harper, whose Teflon coating remains intact.

3 **Idol again!?** Hard to believe, but the talent show that started it all, American Idol, is in its 12th season. Unfortunately, it seems to have descended into a feud between Mariah Carey and Nicki Minaj, while the talent tries to get a few licks in edgewise. I never thought I'd say this, but what happened to the good old days, when professional A & R men identified The Next Big Thing?

4 **Happiness is a warm nutbar.** U.S. President Barack Obama unveils a package of gun-control measures, maintaining that weapons designed for a theatre of war have no place in a movie theatre, a reference to the mass shooting six months ago at a Colorado screening of The Dark Knight Rises. Gunslinger, er, Gov. Rick Perry of Texas angrily rejects any attempt to limit access to assault weapons and instead recommends that we "pray for help." It's worked so far …

5 **Madam, unhand that monkey.** In the inevitable court battle over who gets to keep Darwin the Ikea monkey, the people sheltering him have accused his erstwhile owner of, um, choking the monkey, hitting him with a wooden spoon, forcing him to live in a small crate and making him wear that ridiculous double-breasted shearling coat (OK, I added that last one). If God meant monkeys to go to Ikea, he would have supplied them with little Allen wrenches. Next case!

6 **Bad Dreamliners.** The entire fleet of Boeing 787s, the so-called Dreamliner, has been grounded as engineers try to figure out why the plane's batteries overheat. While they're at it, they should also figure out why I always have to sit between the crying baby and the 400-pound man.

7 **Happy birthday, Betty White.** If you're worried life has passed you by, consider Betty White. She turned 91 Thursday, but she's holding down a regular gig on Hot in Cleveland and this year launched Betty White's Off Their Rockers. Maybe you should Be Like Betty, and make today the first day of the rest of your life.

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HE DECLARES, THE WORLD WATCHES

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE INAUGURATION?

JAN. 19

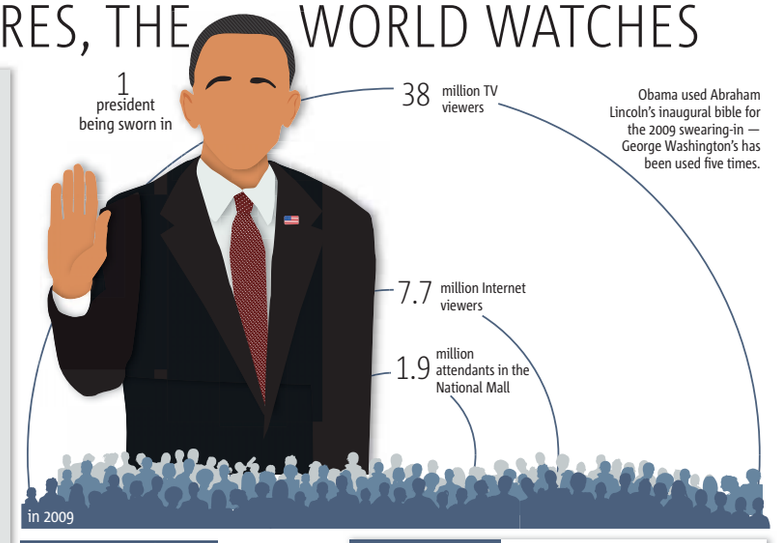
U.S. President Barack Obama and his family participate in a National Day of Service.

JAN. 20

Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden are officially sworn into office at a private event at the White House.

JAN. 21

- Obama, Biden and their families participate in a traditional prayer service at St. John's Church in front of the White House.
- Obama, Biden and their families ride to the Capitol. The public swearing-in ceremony takes place on a platform in front of the Capitol building.
- Biden is sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.
- Obama is sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts.
- Obama delivers his inaugural address.
- Obama and Biden participate in an inaugural lunch with members of Congress.
- Evening: Inaugural Balls. The president and vice-president attend with their wives.


1
president being sworn in
38 million TV viewers
Obama used Abraham Lincoln's inaugural bible for the 2009 swearing-in — George Washington's has been used five times.
7.7 million Internet viewers
1.9 million attendants in the National Mall
in 2009

$4.2 million will be spent on preparing Capitol grounds for the swearing-in ceremony, mostly on the inaugural platform, bleachers and barricades.

SUNDAYS Inauguration Day is always Jan. 20, but by law inaugurations are never held on Sundays. Since Jan. 20 falls on a Sunday this year, the oath is then given privately on Sunday and then publicly on Monday.

35 is the amount of words in the oath for the most powerful job in the world, the U.S. presidency.

THE PRESIDENT'S RIDE

Barack Obama will travel in his armour-plated Cadillac One limousine to Capitol Hill for his inauguration. But cars weren't always the preferred mode of transport:

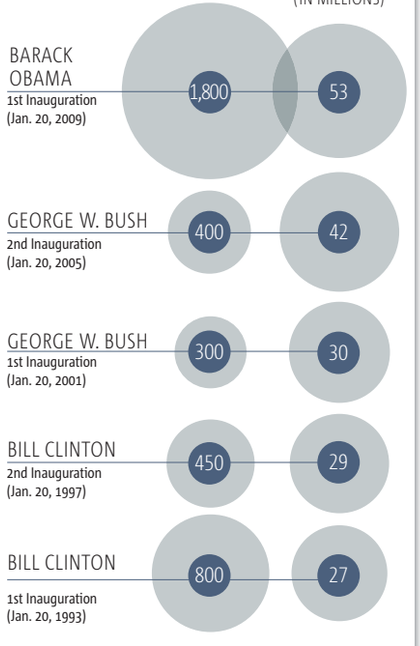
George Washington took a horse-drawn carriage to Federal Hall, New York City (April 30, 1789).

Thomas Jefferson (March 4, 1801) walked to his swearing-in from his lodgings less than 300 metres from Capitol Hill.

William Harrison (March 4, 1841) travelled to the Capitol by railroad from Virginia (an inaugural first).

Lyndon Johnson (Nov. 22, 1963) took his oath inside Air Force One, grounded at Dallas Love Field airport.

PAST INAUGURATIONS



TEXT: METRO WORLD NEWS; GRAPHIC: MIA KORAB; METRO WORLD NEWS
SOURCES: 2013PIC.ORG, CBS, CNN, FEC, JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, NIELSEN WIRE

Worth mentioning

Dear Abby advice columnist dies at 94

Pauline Friedman Phillips, who as Dear Abby dispensed snappy, sometimes saucy advice on love, marriage and meddling mothers-in-law to millions of newspaper readers around the world and opened the way for the likes of Dr. Ruth, Dr. Phil and Oprah, has died. She was 94.

Phillips died Wednesday in Minneapolis after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease, said Gene Willis, a publicist for the Universal Uclick syndicate.

Pauline Friedman Phillips GETTY IMAGES

"My mother leaves very big high heels to fill with a legacy of compassion, commitment and positive social change," her daughter, Jeanne Phillips, who now writes the column, said in a statement.

Pauline Phillips wrote under the name Abigail Van Buren. Her column competed for decades with the advice of Ann Landers, written by her twin sister, Esther Friedman Lederer. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Metropolitan Panel

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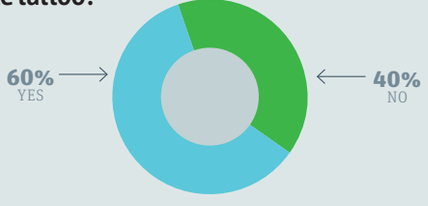
Would you elect a politician who has a full face tattoo?



Twitter

@Bsnowsell: There is probably more invisible tape out there than we realize.

@SaskGregger: Pee Wee's Big Adventure is a film that has stood the test of time

@TheOtherHilary: It's hard to give people the finger when you have mitts on

@zacharylucky: #Saskatoon! I'm going to be playing at Vangeli's on Friday night w/ the Lonesome Weekends. Come drink a beer with me!

@Tony_Butta: Gas is .96 in Saskatoon. Can't remember the last time I saw it that low.

@mcouros: There are only 2 real problems in business; too much or not enough. If you don't take care of the first problem you will end up with the 2nd

metro

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Dame Maggie Smith stars in Quartet — a story of a once famous singing group now retired and living together. HANDOUT

Reel Guys

RICHARD CROUSE AND MARK BRESLIN

Aging a little too well

Crowd pleaser. The Reel Guys agreed Quartet was a nice look at old age, but ultimately couldn't stomach the ending

Richard: Mark, this could have gone one of two ways. It could've been a depressing look at the difficulties of growing old, or it could have turned into one of those "loveable old coot" movies. Instead, like the recent The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, it treats its elderly characters like vibrant, real people, even though they use walkers and have lapses of memory. Medical conditions aside, emotionally they are as rich — if not richer — than 90 per cent of the characters we see in any Katherine Heigl romantic comedy. What did you think?

Mark: Richard, they are lovable old coots, or at least high-functioning geezers. It's an idyllic view of old age — everyone has money and talent, and only a little bit of dementia, a wisp of a stroke, or a slightly malfunctioning hip. If they showed what old age was really like, the movie would be unwatchable. The great thing about the movie is the cast — and what a cast! Could Billy Connolly be more charming? Tom Courtenay more noble? Maggie Smith more ... Maggie Smith? But the film falls down in the storytelling. There's just not enough there. If you're going to cast these legends of stage and screen, you need to give them more to do.

RC: It is predictable, just this side of twee and don't get me started about the unsatisfying ending. Luckily it's also a crowd pleaser due to the chemistry of the cast. I loved Billy Connolly's roguishness and the sense of real warmth that exists between all the main players. That Dustin Hoffman learned a thing or two about directing actors over the years.

Synopsis

The action centres around Beechham House, a luxurious retirement home for aging musicians. Three quarters of a once famous vocal quartet, Reginald (Tom Courtenay), Cissy (Pauline Collins), and Wilfred (Billy Connolly), live there quietly until their former diva, Jean (Dame Maggie Smith), arrives. Her presence stirs up old feelings from ex-husband Reggie but might also be the key to changing the fortunes of the cash-strapped retirement home.

Star ratings:

- Richard: ●●●○○
- Mark: ●●○○○

MB: The ending is horrible, one of the worst cheats in cinematic history. I was looking forward to those venerable actors tackling Verdi. But the scene I really enjoyed was Tom Courtenay teaching a class of visiting teenagers and trying to explain opera through comparisons with rap and hip-hop. But the entire plot revolves around the will-she-or-won't-she decision of Maggie Smith to join the quartet.

The script has her make that decision too blithely after resisting so vociferously. I just wasn't convinced. And she goes from imperious wit in her grand entrance to empathetic sensitivity way too quickly. The movie's not long. Maybe a few scenes were excised?

RC: It feels a bit like there was some unfortunate chopping, but I have to say overall the actors carried the day for me. Weak story and even weaker ending notwithstanding, it's a crowd pleaser.

MB: And it looks great. It was a pleasure spending 90 minutes in a perfectly groomed mansion in the English countryside. When I start to lose it, make me a reservation.

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Horror

Mama

Director. Andres Muschietti

Stars. Jessica Chastain, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau

Tragic circumstances led to two small children (Megan Charpentier and Isabelle Nélisse) being abandoned for five years in a cabin in the woods. Rescued, they are adopted by their uncle (Game of Thrones's Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) and his girlfriend (Jessica Chastain) but the question remains, who is the mysterious Mama they keep talking about? Mama has some nice subtle creepy reveals, a vivid dream sequence and, of course, the ethereal Mama, who occasionally resembles a giant hairball on the floor, but is eerie nonetheless.

RICHARD CROUSE

Action

The Last Stand

Director. Kim Jee-Woon

Stars. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Johnny Knoxville

It may have been nearly a decade since Arnold Schwarzenegger has led a big-screen blockbuster, but in The Last Stand, the sexagenarian is proving he's still got some fight in him. The threadbare story of a small-town sheriff determined to detain a drug lord from escaping into Mexico certainly doesn't break any new ground in the action department, but for fans of the genre, it's a welcome and winking return from the former Governator.

STEVE GOW

Quoted

"You know we went through a really rough time in the press and things like that back in the day. So I really felt like, 'Wow this is a great moment.'

"I am so glad for him. He deserves it. He made a great movie. He has made a couple of great movies."

Jennifer Lopez on her former "Bennifer" lover and Gigli co-star Ben Affleck winning the Golden Globe for the film Argo, which he directed.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., JAN.18 TO THURS., JAN. 24. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

Broadway Theatre
715 Broadway Ave.

Beetlejuice (PG) Fri 12
The Perks of Being a Wallflower (PG) Fri 7 Sat 9 Sun 7 Mon 9 Tue 7 Wed 9 Thu 7
Pusher (14A) Fri 9 Sat 7 Sun 9 Mon 7 Tue 9 Wed 7 Thu 9

Cineplex Odeon Centre
3510 8th St. East

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri-Sun 1:15-5-8:45 Mon-Thu 7:30
Lincoln (PG) Fri-Sun 3:25-6:45-9:55 Mon-Thu 7:50
Monsters, Inc. (G) Fri-Sun 12:50-3:10-5:35 Mon-Tue 5:40 Wed 1:10-5:40 Thu 5:40
One More Try (PG) Fri-Sun 12:30-2:50-5:10-7:30-10 Mon-Tue 5:45-8:05 Wed 1:25-5:45-8:05 Thu 5:45-8:05
Parental Guidance (G) Fri-Sun 12:40 Mon-Thu 5:20 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) Fri-Sun 1:20-4:05-7-9:45 Mon-Tue 5:30-8:15 Wed 1:15-5:30-8:15 Thu 5:30-8:15
Skyfall (PG) Fri-Sun 1-4-7:05-10:10 Mon-Thu 5:20-8:20 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Texas Chainsaw (18A) Fri-Sun 8-10:15 Mon-Thu 7:55
Wreck-It Ralph 3D (G) Fri-Sun 1:05-3:40-6:30-9:15 Mon-Thu 6-8:30

Galaxy Cinemas Saskatoon
347 2nd Ave. South

Broken City (14A) Fri 4:50-7:30-10:10 Sat-Sun 11:35-2:15-4:50-7:30-10:10 Mon-Thu 7:25-10:05
Django Unchained (14A) Fri 7-10:40 Sat-Sun 11:40-3:25-7-10:40 Mon-Thu 8:30
Gangster Squad (14A) No Passes Fri 4:55-7:45-10:25 No Passes Sat-Sun 11:30-2:05-4:55-7:45-10:25 No Passes Mon-Thu 7:45-10:25
Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters 3D (18A) Thu 10
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri 6:45-10:30 Sat-Sun 11:25-3-6:45-10:30 Mon 7:55 Tue-Thu 8
The Impossible (14A) Fri 4:20-7:05-10 Sat 11-1:30-4:20-7:05-10 Sun 1:30-4:20-7:05-10 Mon-Thu 6:55-9:45
Jack Reacher (PG) Fri-Sun 4:40-7:40-10:35 Mon 10 Tue-Thu 7:05-10
The Last Stand (14A) Fri 5:20-8-10:40 Sat-Sun 12:05-2:45-5:20-8-10:40 Mon-Thu 7:50-10:30
Life of Pi 3D (G) Fri 4:10-6:55-9:50 Sat-Sun 1:15-4:10-6:55-9:50 Mon-Thu 6:50-9:40
Looney Tunes: Back in Action (STC) Sat 11
Mama (14A) Fri 5:45-8:15-10:45 Sat 12:55-3:15-5:45-8:15-10:45 Sun 12:45-3:15-5:45-8:15-10:45 Mon-Thu 8:05-10:30
The Metropolitan Opera: Maria Stuarda Live (STC) Sat 11:55
Les Misérables (PG) Fri 6:35-10:05 Sat-Sun 11:45-3:10-6:35-10:05 Mon-Thu 7:30
Rise of the Guardians (G) Sat-Sun 11:50-2:20
This Is 40 (14A) Fri-Sat 4-7:05-10 Sun 1-4-7:05-10 Mon-Wed 7:15-10:15 Thu 7:15
Zero Dark Thirty (14A) No Passes Fri 7:20-10:45 No Passes Sat-Sun 12:15-3:40-7:20-10:45 No Passes Mon-Thu 7-10:20

Zero Dark Thirty. HANDOUT

Roxy Theatre
320 20th St West

Anna Karenina (PG) Fri 7-9:30 Sat-Sun 2:30-7-9:30 Mon-Thu 7-9:30
Lincoln (PG) Fri 7:30 Sat-Sun 2-7:30 Mon-Thu 7:30

Rainbow Cinemas Saskatoon
The Centre at Circle & 8th

Argo (PG) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:50-6:50-9:30
Flight (14A) Fri-Thu 1-4:40-7:45
The Guilt Trip (PG) Fri 4:15-4:50-7:30-9:55 Sat-Sun 11:30-4:15-4:50-7:30-9:55 Mon-Thu 4:15-4:50-7:30-9:55
Here Comes the Boom (PG) Fri 2:10-4:40-7:15-9:40 Sat-Sun 11:10-2:10-4:40-7:15-9:40 Mon-Thu 2:10-4:40-7:15-9:40
Hotel Transylvania (G) Fri 1:50-4:20-7:20 Sat-Sun 11:40-1:50-4:20-7:20 Mon-Thu 1:50-4:20-7:20
Ice Age: Continental Drift (G) Fri-Thu 2-4:30
Pitch Perfect (PG) Fri-Thu 7:10-9:45
Red Dawn (PG) Fri-Thu 9:50
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri 1:40-4-7:05-9:25 Sat-Sun 11:20-1:40-4-7:05-9:25 Mon-Thu 1:40-4-7:05-9:25
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (14A) Fri 1:35-4:10-7-9:35 Sat-Sun 11-1:35-4:10-7-9:35 Mon-Wed 1:35-4:10-7-9:35 Thu 4:10-7-9:35 Thu 1:35

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Is Lohan working as a high-paid escort?

Lindsay Lohan has reportedly found a new way to help pay off her hefty debts. Her father, Michael Lohan, and other sources claim that the troubled actress is making money working as a high-class escort, according to Star magazine.

"She is getting paid to date rich men," Michael says, putting the blame squarely on his ex-wife, Dina Lohan. "Dina is pimping her out. It's disgusting."

But so far there are no allegations of Lindsay providing any services more intimate than acting as arm candy.

"The dates last for days, and the guys pay for everything — hotel, travel costs, food, whatever — as well as jewelry and other gifts," another source tells the magazine.

Russell Crowe

Crowe shoots down romantic rumours

Russell Crowe has taken to Twitter to refute a New York Post story that he and burlesque star Dita Von Teese are an item.

The paper reported that the pair had enjoyed "a romantic couple's massage" at the Four Seasons hotel in New York last month and have been getting flirty.

"Dita Von Teese is brave, smart, sweet and elegant. She is a friend of mine. Who wouldn't want friends like that? Friends, not lovers," Crowe tweeted after the item appeared.

Nicole Kidman. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Kidman not weirded out by peeing on Zac Efron

Nicole Kidman has been getting plenty of attention for her Golden-Globe-nominated role in the Paperboy thanks to an infamous scene in which she urinates on Zac Efron.

But Kidman doesn't get what the big deal is.

"I just don't find urination shocking. I think I peed in the beginning of Eyes Wide Shut, too. But then, I don't find a lot of things shocking. Violence is a lot more shocking than sex — sex is primal," she tells the Hollywood Reporter.

"I felt shy singing in Moulin Rouge, but peeing — no, not shy."

Jennifer Lopez chasing a new lover named Oscar

Jennifer Lopez's career is doing just fine, but there's at least one item she still has her heart set on: an Oscar.

"I think everybody that has ever taken acting seriously would love to be recognized in that way," Lopez tells E! News. "Of course! Why not?"

She's even good about keeping her acceptance speech up to date, should the need for it arise.

"It changes every so often over the years," Lopez says. "Different people, different things."

Jennifer Lopez.

Twitter

@RebelWilson
I would never online date..unless it was for 'comedy research.'The other things I've done for 'comedy research' include fat camp, drinking..

@JoshRadnor
I would be a terrible matador.

@msleamichele
Treated myself to a little mani/pedi after work today:) Relaxing now and catching up on #topchef!

@AlbertBrooks
Bless me Oprah for I have sinned.

Liquid Assets

Old and new school taste

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

French wines are a lot like David Bowie. Just when you think they've got nothing new to offer, they come out of nowhere with a brand new vibe based on their old school legacy.

While Bowie has his first album in a decade dropping in March, savvy wine lovers are rediscovering the value found across France — especially in its lesser known regions like the Côtes du Rhône. Though famous for Châteauneuf-du-Pape — its liquid love letter to the pope — many wine newbies are surprised to discover that the Rhône Valley is the original home of both the red syrah (a.k.a. shiraz) and grenache grape varieties.

Grenache dominates the southern portion of the valley, where the bright-fruited berry makes up the majority of the area's blends. Most are smooth, new worldly wines with great food appeal (think everything from hearty stews and lamb to a relaxed charcuterie platter).

Famille Perrin is a regional superstar and its grenache-led 2010 Côtes du Rhône Réserve Rouge ($15.95 to $17.99) is rich and elegant with licorice and wild berry aromatics and a meaty, mouth-filling body of balanced black fruit.

PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.

Chicken and Waffles add soul to brunch

Quick eats. Good food doesn't have to take forever to prepare with this delicious recipe

This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chicken and Waffles combines the best of the breakfast and dinner worlds in one soul food dish made famous by the Southern U.S.

There's even a whole chapter devoted to the meal in Fried Chicken: An American Story by John T. Edge.

In it, he writes that the dish goes back to the late 19th century, when Southern African-Americans, recently freed from slavery, began migrating to the northern United States.

According to Edge: "My guess is that it comes from the days when someone would go out in the morning and wring a chicken's neck and fry it for breakfast. Preparing a breakfast bread with whatever meat you have on the hoof, so to speak, comes out of the rural tradition."

The fried chicken is usually served with a waffle that is covered in butter or syrup. This version, however, is more like the traditional Pennsylvania Dutch dish, which consists of a plain waffle with pulled, stewed chicken covered in gravy.

But it's even easier than that when you use store-bought waffles and rotisserie chicken.

No frozen waffles handy? You can serve this chicken and gravy over toasted slabs of sourdough bread too.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Two 4-oz containers sliced button mushrooms
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 4 frozen waffles
- Meat from a 2-lb rotisserie chicken, warmed and shredded

1. In a large skillet over medium-high, heat the oil. Add the mushrooms, onion and garlic, then sauté until the mushrooms are browned and the pan is nearly dry, about 5 minutes.

2. Add the wine and stir to deglaze the pan. When the wine has evaporated, stir in the cream, then bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper, then set aside.

3. Toast the waffles according to package directions. Place one toasted waffle on each serving plate. Top with a heap of warmed, shredded chicken, then spoon ample amounts of mushroom gravy over it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ WITH FILES FROM METRO

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Let the (on-ice) games begin

48-game dash. After all the negotiations, teams with little turnover may have leg up in shortened season

The 48-game sprint of a hockey season hasn't even started, and NHL players are already winded.

There is very little in terms of a blueprint on how to prep for a lockout-shortened season that will be crammed into just 99 days after less than a week of training camp.

But ready or not, the puck will drop on Saturday and there is a small margin of error as every game now carries extra weight.

"It's not a grind. We want this," said Columbus Blue Jackets president of hockey operations John Davidson, a former NHL goalie. "We've been waiting months for this, to have this puck drop and hear the skates, bodies banging and guys with lots of energy.

"Coaches have had months and months and months to get ready. It's all good."

Teams aren't flying completely blind because this is the second time a long NHL lockout forced a season to be cut from 82 games to 48 per team. Back in 1995, the New Jersey Devils and Detroit Red Wings made the most of their opportunities and reached the Stanley Cup final.

"It feels like we just came out of an all-star break or something like that. We've got the same team," Phoenix Coyotes coach Dave Tippett said. "The guys understand what we're trying to do. We don't have to put a lot of time explaining terms or what we're going to do."

The Pittsburgh Penguins are trying to tap into the past to get a leg up now. Player development coach Bill Guerin was a member of those 1995 Devils, who got into the playoffs as the No. 5 seed in the Eastern Conference and rode the wave to a sweep of the Red Wings for the championship.

"They didn't start well. They were starting under .500 their first segment," Penguins coach Dan Bylsma said. "They were a team that did have a lot of veteran experience, and we've talked to Billy about his experience, and how the team came back, and how they rotated players in and out of the lineup, how the goalie was played, what the talk in training camp was."

History suggests clubs that rush into this season without having to rely on nametags might already have an edge.

"We can look at that as a positive for sure," Penguins captain Sidney Crosby said. "Guys understand their roles and what they need to do, and there's trust there. Maybe with some newer guys you have to develop that a little bit more, but I would say it can't hurt. It certainly helps a little bit to have that familiarity."

The Buffalo Sabres are in a similar position. Even though they failed to reach the playoffs last season, they are returning a core of players that surged to a 15-5-4 finish that left them just short of a postseason spot.

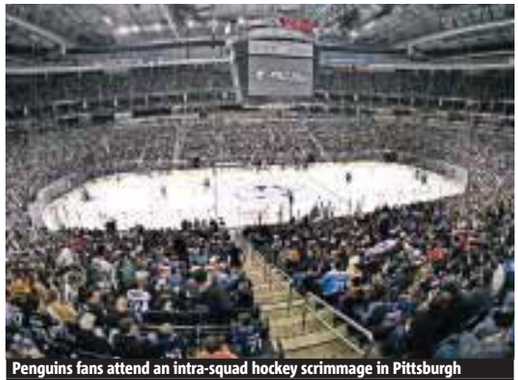
Only Brad Boyes isn't back with this crew of hungry Sabres. Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff doesn't have to teach his system, so his focus this week has been on conditioning and getting his club ready to jump into game action.

"We're going to concentrate on trying to ramp up tuning the body and getting ready for a real hard compete," he said.

Ruff, who has been behind the Sabres bench since 1997, can harken back to his own experience as an assistant coach in 1995 with the Florida Panthers.

"I remember going into it, you just thought every game meant so much," Ruff said. "I think what you have to really be careful of is not putting too much into the wins and not putting too much into the losses.

"Try to keep a pretty level ground." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Penguins fans attend an intra-squad hockey scrimmage in Pittsburgh on Wednesday. The Pens may not feel the effects of a shortened season as much as other teams, having had little turnover with their roster.

GENE J. PUSKAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Survey results

Canadian hockey fans loyal to NHL, poll finds

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman's assessment of the loyalty of hockey fans appears to be borne out by a new poll, at least for the hardcore north of the 49th parallel.

The Canadian Press Harris-Decima survey suggests a strong majority of Canadian hockey followers will keep watching when NHL games return this weekend after a three-month lockout by team owners.

The poll found that two out of three respondents — 66 per cent — say they'll watch about the same amount of hockey as in the past, while just under one in four — 23 per cent — say they'll watch less.

"I think the poll supports the conventional wisdom of the fans, that the lockout has hurt the game," said pollster Allan Gregg, chairman of Harris-Decima.

"Who it's going to really, really hurt is the occasional fan, and that's not an insignificant chunk of the total population."

The NHL's third lockout in 20 years prompted a lot of loud complaints that the game's best customers were being taken for granted and led to threats of fan boycotts.

Yet among the most avid NHL followers, the survey found that 69 per cent said they'll watch about the same amount of hockey.

The pressure will be on John Tortorella to get the most from his Rangers, who added all-star forward Rick Nash to their attack after finishing first in the Eastern Conference last season. JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Less than a cup won't be enough

Only one winner.
Handful of teams have gone all-in looking for chance at Stanley Cup

The New York Rangers made a big push in trading for Rick Nash to improve their chances of winning a championship for the first time since 1994.

"It's the right time for him to be here with us," Rangers coach John Tortorella said.

On the opposite side of the continent, the Vancouver Canucks can't wait to resume the franchise's quest for its first cup when the lockout-delayed season starts Saturday night at home against Anaheim.

The Chicago Blackhawks and Pittsburgh Penguins are also feeling a sense of urgency to win it all again.

And advancing one round in the playoffs isn't enough anymore for the Nashville Predators, who raised the stakes by matching a 14-year, $110-million contract to keep star defenceman Shea Weber.

Even though the Predators don't have the best defensive pair in the league anymore, with Ryan Suter joining fellow free agent Zach Parise in Minnesota, Nashville expects to try for more than just a third straight trip to the Western Conference semifinals.

"Without a doubt, the ultimate goal is the Stanley Cup," said Weber, who was wooed by the Philadelphia Flyers with a long and lucrative offer sheet as a restricted free agent last summer.

"And to do that, you have to make the post-season. Anything can happen, as we all witnessed with Los Angeles last year."

The Kings, seeded eighth, started by knocking off the top-seeded Canucks in the West and finished with a 6-1 rout of the New Jersey Devils in Game 6 of the final.

That's why Detroit Red Wings general manager Ken Holland, who is hoping to help the franchise extend its post-season streak, said it's not realistic for there to be a lot of pressure on any one team to win it all.

"The cup contenders will be the 16 teams that make the playoffs," Holland said while watching his team prepare on the ice earlier this week for a 48-game regular season.

"The eighth seed won the Stanley Cup against the sixth from the East. The days in the 1990s and early 2000s when the top teams had easier runs in the early rounds are over."

It won't be pretty, though, in some cities if the results are anything short of a championship.

The Rangers made a long run in the post-season, six games into the Eastern Conference final against New Jersey.

The Rangers also played in the Eastern Conference final in 1997. Those two post-seasons are the team's longest since beating the Canucks in Game 7 of the 1994 Stanley Cup final. That was the year before the last lockout-shortened season.

New York led the East with 109 points last season with Marian Gaborik and Brad Richards leading up front and goaltender Henrik Lundqvist having the best year of his career. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"It's wide open, and that's the beauty of the league."

Detroit Red Wings general manager Ken Holland

Expected to be exceptional

Shortened training camps are nearing an end for the NHL's 30 teams as they prepare for the truncated regular season. The puck drops on Saturday. Here is a look at six NHLers to watch this season:

THE CANADIAN PRESS

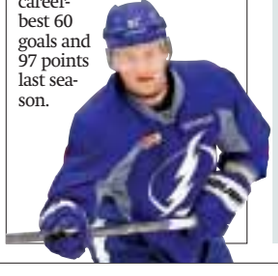
Photos by The Canadian Press/The Associated Press/Getty Images

Sidney Crosby

Sid's not a kid anymore. The Penguins centre is 25 now and hoping to stay healthy this year. Crosby missed most of the last two seasons due to post-concussion syndrome. He posted impressive numbers in limited action last season (37 points in just 22 games) and says he's no longer dealing with concussion-like symptoms.

Steven Stamkos

Stamkos has been a rock for Tampa Bay since the Lightning selected him with the first overall pick of the 2008 draft. He had 46 points as a rookie before blossoming as a sophomore with 51 goals and 95 points. Stamkos has kept up the pace with 91 points in 2010-11 and a career-best 60 goals and 97 points last season.

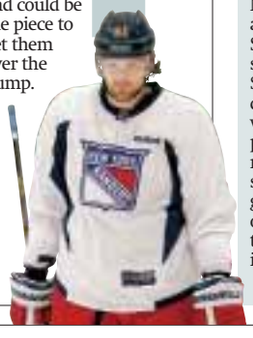


Cory Schneider

The goaltending drama is an evolving soap opera in Vancouver and it's showing no signs of slowing down. Schneider took over the starting spot from Roberto Luongo and is a good bet to see the bulk of the playing time this season. Schneider posted a 20-8-1 record last season with a 1.96 goals-against average. He'll be eager to prove he deserves his status as the team's go-to guy in net.

Rick Nash

The Broadway spotlight will be shining on the five-time all-star forward, who finally gets a crack at playing for a contender after years in Columbus. Nash was dealt to the Rangers last summer and could be the piece to get them over the hump.



Zach Parise

Minnesota landed top free agents Parise and Ryan Suter in the off-season, signing them to whopping $98-million US, 13-year deals. Season-ticket sales went up along with expectations. The Wild have missed the playoffs for four straight seasons. Parise gives the team a consistent offensive weapon and he thrives when the pressure is on.

Henrik Zetterberg

Talk about big shoes to fill. Zetterberg will wear the "C" for Detroit with previous captain Nicklas Lidstrom retired. Zetterberg is coming off a team-leading 69-point campaign. Zetterberg's main goal is leading the Red Wings to the playoffs for the 22nd straight season.

WHL

Blades host two weekend games

The Saskatoon Blades will be looking to pick up a couple of wins at home this weekend.

Up first, the Blades (21-20-0-2) face off against the Moose Jaw Warriors, who currently sit at the bottom of the WHL's Eastern Conference with a 14-23-3-5 record. The puck drops Friday night at 7:05 at Credit Union Centre.

On Saturday, the Blades play host to Brandon. The Wheat Kings have been struggling this season and sit above the Warriors in the Eastern Conference, with a 16-25-2-2 record. The game starts at 7:05 p.m. at Credit Union Centre. **METRO**

CFL

Riders sign two familiar faces

The Saskatchewan Roughriders have signed running back Stephfon Green and defensive back Ramzee Robinson.

Green returns to the Roughriders after spending the final two weeks of the 2012 season on the team's practice roster. The 23-year-old spent 2012 training camp with the Detroit Lions, registering seven carries for 95 yards and a touchdown in two pre-season games.

The New York native spent four seasons at Penn State, finishing his collegiate career with 285 rushing attempts for 1,351 yards and 14 touchdowns and added another 457 yards on 40 pass receptions.

Robinson also returns to the Riders after spending time on the team's practice roster during the 2012 season. The 28-year-old previously spent time with Denver, Cleveland, Washington and Philadelphia throughout his NFL tenure. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

CFL

Lulay signs new deal with Lions

Quarterback Travis Lulay signed a new contract with the B.C. Lions on Thursday.

Lulay agreed to a three-year pact that takes effect immediately. The deal includes two years plus an option.

The Oregon native had put a long-term deal on hold last year in case he wanted to pursue NFL options. However, he decided to stick with B.C. after guiding the Lions to a 13-5 record in the regular season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dual-threat dilemma for Falcons vs. Kaepernick

Conference championships. 49ers QB faces Falcons after he ran wild on Packers

Atlanta Falcons Tony Gonzalez, front centre, leads teammates Julio Jones, left, Roddy White and other Falcons to their indoor practice facility in Flowery Branch, Ga., on Wednesday. The Falcons' offence want to keep the ball in their hands and out of the hands of versatile 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

DAVID TULIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michael Turner's trademark high-pitched laugh filled the Falcons' locker room.

Asked about San Francisco quarterback Colin Kaepernick, Turner grinned Thursday and said, "I'm glad I'm not on defence."

Turner, the big running back, and the Falcons' offence want to hold the ball and limit Kaepernick's time on the field in Sunday's NFC championship game.

The Falcons have seen enough in Kaepernick's eight starts to respect the versatile quarterback with the long stride and strong right arm.

Kaepernick comes to Atlanta after running for 181 yards — an NFL record for a quarterback — with two touchdowns in last week's win over Green Bay. He also threw for 263 yards with two touchdowns. He became the third QB, after Otto Graham and Jay Cutler, to run and throw for at least two touchdowns in a post-season game.

The Falcons are impressed, even after facing such other dual-threat quarterbacks as Robert Griffin III, Cam Newton and Russell Wilson this season.

Linebacker Sean Weatherspoon says Kaepernick is unique.

"I think he's just a different guy altogether," Weatherspoon said. "He's a taller guy, obviously. He broke the record last week, so that makes him special and different. I think he has a lot more speed. Russell is more of a quick guy. Colin is a faster guy."

Wilson and Griffin are scramblers. Kaepernick looks more like a 200-meter sprinter with his unusually long stride.

Kaepernick has avoided the big hits that have made it difficult for such other running quarterbacks as Griffin and Michael Vick to avoid injuries.

He said his strategy is "Run where they're not."

Kaepernick's big game last week earned him the promise of more attention from the Falcons' defence.

Falcons coach Mike Smith said he is preparing for the 49ers' "traditional offence that we're used to seeing" as well as the pistol formation with read-option plays that Kaepernick ran in college at Nevada.

"We're going to have to be prepared to stop him," Smith said. "We're going to see things we haven't seen in terms of what they'll do with their formations."

"We definitely have to have somebody accounting for him," said safety Thomas DeCoud, adding defensive backs have to be ready to leave their assignments to help contain Kaepernick's runs.

"Last week we kind of bought into plastering the receivers if (Wilson) broke containment because of the fact he likes to find the open receivers," DeCoud said. "This week, we'll have to be cognizant of maybe coming off coverage if he crosses the line of scrimmage to thwart him making a big play on us."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AFC championship

- New England gets a chance to extend its mastery in the final step to the Super Bowl on Sunday against Baltimore, the team the Patriots beat a year ago for the conference crown.
- That win made them 4-0 in home conference title games.

Armstrong comes clean in Oprah interview

Lance Armstrong, right, celebrates winning bronze in the men's individual time trial at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, with gold-medallist Viacheslav Ekimov, centre, and silver-medallist Jan Ullrich. The IOC has stripped Armstrong of his medal.

LAURENT REBOURS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

He did it. He finally admitted it. Lance Armstrong doped.

He was light on the details and didn't name names. He mused that he might not have been caught if not for his comeback in 2009. And he was certain his "fate was sealed" when longtime friend, training partner and trusted lieutenant George Hincapie, who was along for the ride on all seven of Armstrong's Tour de France wins, was forced to give him up to anti-doping authorities.

But right from the start and more than two dozen times during the first of a two-part interview Thursday night with Oprah Winfrey, the disgraced former cycling champion acknowledged what he had lied about repeatedly for years, and what had been one of the worst-kept secrets for the better part of a week: He was the ringleader of an elaborate doping scheme on a U.S. Postal Service team that swept him to the top of the podium at the Tour de France time after time.

""I'm a flawed character," he said.

Did it feel wrong?

"No," Armstrong replied. "Scary."

"Did you feel bad about it?" Winfrey pressed him.

"No," he said. "Even scarier."

"Did you feel in any way that you were cheating?"

"No," Armstrong paused. "Scariest."

Armstrong was direct and matter-of-fact, neither pained nor defensive. He looked straight ahead. There were no tears and very few laughs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Medal stripped

The International Olympic Committee sent a letter to Armstrong on Wednesday night asking him to return the bronze medal he won at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Certain goals may seem to be out of your reach but they are not. The planets are urging you not just to aim high but to aim higher than ever before. All things are possible if you want them enough.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You seem reluctant to put your point of view across. Why is that? If you have something of value to say, you have not just a right but a responsibility to speak up. So speak up.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
It may appear as if someone you work or do business with has been cheating you but can you be sure? The planets warn you cannot trust your senses today, so err on the side of caution and don't make accusations.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You won't have any trouble getting others to back your ideas today but you may be in trouble later on if they don't work out the way you expected. For that reason alone make it clear there are no guarantees.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Some kind of habit is holding you back and it's time you got past it. Simply stopping won't do it — you've tried that before. The trick is to replace a bad habit by a good habit.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Avoid poking fun at people in positions of power, no matter how tempting it may be. Laughter is only the best medicine if it is the kind that everyone can share in. Anything else could be dangerous today.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Don't take what you are told at face value. Check the facts for yourself. What others say may sound convincing but more likely it's just self-serving. Do your homework and avoid making costly mistakes.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You may be resentful that changes of one sort or another have been forced on you but there is no point making a fuss. The best you can do is to go with the flow and not draw attention to yourself.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Resist the temptation to talk up the facts as others may see that as a form of deception. It may be easy enough to do but in the long-term you will regret it. Protect your reputation for honesty at all costs.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The planets warn that your powers of intuition are on the blink and not to be trusted, at least for the next 24 hours. Stick to what you know to be true and in other matters be exceptionally cautious.

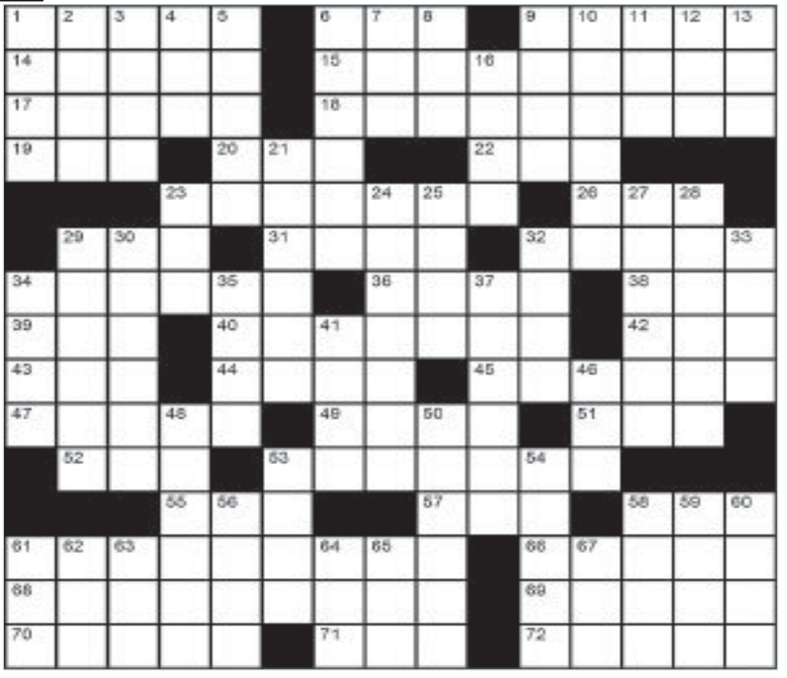
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Try not to let your fears get out of hand over the next 24 hours. Take your mind off your worries by focusing on all the things you have to be thankful for. That should keep you busy for a while.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Those who think highly of you will help you out in any way they can today, but first you must ask. The Sun's link to communications planet Mercury means your wish is their command. So wish away.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

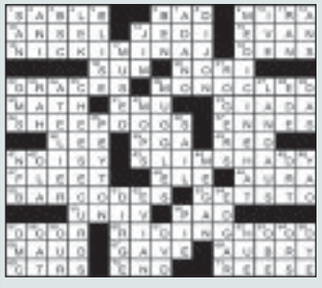
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Toronto __ Centre
6. Task
9. "__ la vista, baby." - The Terminator
14. CBC's "Republic of __"
15. BC's Revelstoke, for one: 2 wds.
17. Taylor Swift's "_ __ You Were Trouble"
18. On the costume of Bruce Wayne's alter ego: 2 wds.
19. 'Legal' suffix
20. Extinct bird
22. "The Simpsons" storekeeper
23. Reporter on "etalk", Traci __
26. Got [abbr.]
29. Jolt
31. Herring-like fish
32. Open court hearings
34. Formula
36. Endorse
38. Mr. Reed
39. __-locka, Florida
40. Ducks city
42. 'Serpent' suffix
43. Psychedelic†drug
44. Not is
45. __, Nova Scotia
47. Pretend
49. Destiny's Child hit: "Say My __"
51. Bronze Roman money
52. 'Part' add-on (Collaborator)
53. "Deuce __: Male Gigolo"
55. Green tropical fruit ...partially eaten here
57. Irish actor Stephen
58. Li'l accounting review
61. Green-haired Canadian icon: 3 wds.
66. Jennifer or Meg
68. The Glass __ (Tennessee Williams play)
69. US Supreme Court Justice Ms. Kagan
70. Fraternity letter
71. Wine aperitif
72. Singer/songwriter Sarah

Down
1. Ms. Falco
2. Says it's hunky-dory
3. Actress Ms. Daly
4. Grand Opry link
5. "Brand __ __" by Alicia Keys
6. German composer, in brief: _._. __ (b.1685 - d.1750)
7. Quebec-made cheese
8. Smidgen
9. Rope fiber
10. Bruce Springsteen album: 'Greetings from __ Park N.J.'
11. Pine-__
12. Green Day drummer, __ Cool
13. 24-hr. banker
16. Back
21. Mary-Kate and Ashley
23. Hosp. picture
24. Twitter's #
25. Garfield's pal
27. Chanteuse Ms. Dion
28. Pilotless aircrafts
29. Carly Rae __
30. Evangeline: A Tale of __ (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem)
32. Les Miz song: "__ Own": 2 wds.
33. Chop __
34. Massage for therapy
35. Rapper T-__
37. Ms. Bundchen
41. Years, in old Rome
46. Stealing bird
48. Alexander __ Bell
50. Sharpie product
53. Music systems company
54. Hall & __
56. "Luka" singer Suzanne
58. Helm position
59. Forearm bone
60. Ms. Cannon
61. First aid team [acronym]
62. Agnus __ (Mass prayer)
63. 1987 to 1994 'Star Trek' series, to fans
64. Mork's planet
65. Nero's 102
67. __-advised

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

9								1
	4	6				9	3	
			5	1	9			
		2	9	4	3	1		
7	3						2	9
		9	2	8	7	3		
			7	2	4			
	8	7				5	4	
6								2

Yesterday's Sudoku

4	9	1	8	6	2	5	7	3
8	2	5	3	4	7	6	1	9
6	7	3	9	5	1	8	2	4
3	1	9	4	7	5	2	8	6
5	6	7	2	8	3	4	9	1
2	4	8	6	1	9	7	3	5
7	3	6	5	9	8	1	4	2
1	5	2	7	3	4	9	6	8
9	8	4	1	2	6	3	5	7

Sharability

easy hard

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2012 HYUNDAI ELANTRA GL	$20,995	$3,996	$16,999
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2012 HYUNDAI ACCENT GL	$18,388	$1,500	$16,888
2010 HYUNDAI VERACRUZ LTD AWD	$32,995	$4,107	$28,888
2011 HYUNDAI SANTA FE GL AWD	$31,995	$5,107	$26,888
2010 HYUNDAI VERACRUZ LTD AWD	$34,995	$5,107	$29,888
2013 HYUNDAI ELANTRA L	$17,995	$1,607	$16,388
2012 HYUNDAI SONATA GLS	$21,995	$2,107	$19,888
2010 HYUNDAI SONATA GL SPORT	$16,995	$1,107	$15,888
2011 HYUNDAI ACCENT GL	$13,995	$996	$12,999
2009 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL FWD	$19,955	$1,956	$17,999
2012 HYUNDAI SONATA GLS	$20,995	$1,107	$19,888
2010 HYUNDAI SANTA FE GL AWD	$20,995	$1,107	$19,888
2009 HYUNDAI SONATA GL	$18,995	$2,996	$15,999
2009 HYUNDAI SONATA GL SPORT	$13,995	$607	$13,388
2010 HYUNDAI ACCENT L	$12,995	$1,107	$11,888
2012 HYUNDAI ELANTRA TOURING GL	$18,995	$996	$17,999
2013 HYUNDAI SONATA GLS	$23,995	$1,107	$22,888
2012 HYUNDAI SONATA GLS	$22,995	$1,107	$21,888
2013 HYUNDAI ACCENT GL	$17,995	$607	$17,388
2012 HYUNDAI SONATA LTD	$29,995	$607	$29,388
2012 HYUNDAI ELANTRA TOURING GL	$18,995	$996	$17,999
2013 HYUNDAI SONATA GLS	$24,995	$2,107	$22,888
2013 HYUNDAI ACCENT GL	$18,995	$1,607	$17,388
2011 HYUNDAI SONATA GL	$17,995	$14,888	$3,107
2009 HYUNDAI SONATA GL	$14,995	$996	$13,999
2013 HYUNDAI ACCENT GL	$18,995	$607	$18,388
2012 HYUNDAI SANTA FE GL SPORT AWD	$30,995	$2,107	$28,888
2012 HYUNDAI ACCENT GL	$17,995	$607	$17,388
2012 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL AWD	$26,995	$1,107	$25,888
2010 HYUNDAI SANTA FE GL SPORT AWD	$26,388	$500	$25,888
2011 HYUNDAI SONATA GLS	$17,995	$2,107	$15,888
2009 HYUNDAI SANTA FE LTD AWD	$24,995	$607	$24,388
2011 HYUNDAI TUCSON LTD AWD	$29,388	$500	$28,888
2012 HYUNDAI ELANTRA GL	$19,388	$500	$18,888
2009 HYUNDAI SANTA FE LTD AWD	$25,388	$500	$24,888
2013 HYUNDAI TUCSON GLS AWD	$29,388	$500	$28,888
2010 HYUNDAI SANTA FE GL AWD	$25,995	$1,107	$24,888
2011 HYUNDAI ELANTRA TOURING GLS	$17,995	$996	$16,999
2012 HYUNDAI ACCENT GLS	$20,388	$1,500	$18,888
2010 HYUNDAI SANTA FE LTD AWD	$30,388	$500	$29,888
2011 HYUNDAI SONATA GL	$20,388	$500	$19,888
2012 HYUNDAI SANTA FE GL AWD	$28,995	$607	$28,388
2012 HYUNDAI SONATA GLS	$21,995	$1,107	$20,888
2013 HYUNDAI ELANTRA GL	$20,445	$557	$19,888
2013 HYUNDAI ACCENT GL	$19,388	$500	$18,888
2010 HYUNDAI SANTA FE SPORT AWD	$25,995	$607	$25,388
2010 HYUNDAI SANTA FE LTD AWD	$27,995	$607	$27,388

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- 30 DAY/3000KM WARRANTY
- 7 DAY EXCHANGE GUARANTEE
- 92-POINT INSPECTION
- GUARANTEED PRICE POLICY

	WAS	SAVE	NOW
2010 HONDA CIVIC DX-G	$16,995	$1,996	$14,999
2007 BUICK ALLURE CX	$14,995	$5,996	$8,999
2011 FORD FOCUS SES	$19,995	$4,996	$14,999
2009 HONDA CIVIC LX	$16,995	$2,107	$14,888
2007 HONDA CIVIC LX	$13,995	$2,107	$11,888
2011 KIA RONDO EX	$17,995	$2,607	$15,388
2009 JEEP WRANGLER X AWD	$19,995	$1,107	$18,888
2005 TOYOTA CAMRY SE	$16,955	$2,956	$13,999
2010 CHEVROLET EQUINOX LT AWD	$24,995	$996	$23,999
2007 PONTIAC WAVE SE	$10,995	$1,107	$9,888
2007 DODGE CALIBER R/T	$15,995	$607	$15,388
2006 MAZDA 3 GS	$11,995	$607	$11,388
2012 FIAT 500 SPORT	$15,995	$996	$14,999
2012 CHEVROLET CRUZE LT TURBO	$15,995	$607	$15,388
2007 HONDA ACCORD SE	$16,995	$3,996	$14,999
2012 CHEVROLET SONIC LS	$16,995	$607	$16,388

Price / payments exclude all applicable taxes and fees OAC EOE

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- VERY BEST RECONDITIONING
- COMPLETE DISCLOSURE
- FFUN / HYUNDAI GUARANTEE
- FFUN EXPERIENCE

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